

The *Columbia Journalism Review* has an [excellent piece](#) on Congressman Pence and the media shield bill he will be introducing tomorrow with Congressman Boucher.

Here is an excerpt:

...Conservatives these days are generally not considered champions of the national press, but a little more than two years ago, after reading an editorial in The New York Times about Judith Miller's jailing and the need for a federal reporter's privilege, Pence took it upon himself to champion the legislative effort for a federal media shield law, which would protect journalists from being forced to reveal confidential sources. Pence, a forty-seven-year-old lawyer and former talk-show host, may not like what he sees as "bad news bias" in the mainstream media, but he's far more troubled by the "rising tide of cases where federal prosecutors have used the threat of jail time or outright jail time to coerce reporters to reveal confidential sources." For the last two years, Pence has been the primary legislative force behind the shield-law effort, making it one of his signature issues. "Our founders did not put the freedom of the press in the First Amendment because they got good press—quite the opposite was true," he says. For Pence, the shield law represents a good-government provision, one that would ultimately help citizens "make informed decisions" about their leadership.

Though Indiana has had a reporter's privilege statute on the books since 1941, Pence admits he had been unfamiliar with the issue. After reading the Times editorial, he spent two months researching the topic. In late 2004, he and his staff reached out to members of the media and the legal community and began crafting a bill, which he and Representative Rick Boucher, a Virginia Democrat, introduced in the House in February 2005. And unlike previous attempts to pass a shield law, this one would have legs....

Labels: [Congressman Rick Boucher](#) , [Media shield](#)